

# U.S. FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD IRAQ

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## HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

NOVEMBER 13, 2013

**Serial No. 113-83**

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/> or  
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

85-554PDF

WASHINGTON : 2014

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## U.S. FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD IRAQ

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:36 p.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If the witnesses could take their spot on the dais.

The subcommittee will come to order. I apologize for being late. So sorry. After recognizing myself and the ranking member Deutch for 5 minutes each for our opening statements, I will recognize other members seeking recognition for 1 minute. We will then hear from our witnesses and without objection, the witnesses' prepared statements will be made a part of the record. Members may have 5 days to insert questions and statements for the record, subject to the length limitation in the rules.

Before we begin this afternoon's hearing, I will hand Deputy Assistant Secretary McGurk an envelope, and ask that he please deliver it to Secretary Kerry. These are my previous letters to Secretary Kerry pleading for the United States to help the residents of Camps Ashraf and Liberty and to prevent another deadly attack like the one from September at Camp Ashraf which left 52 dead and 7 hostages who are still missing.

Also, a video taken by the residents of Ashraf during the latest assault that I urge Secretary Kerry and all members of the subcommittee to view, and finally, a letter to Secretary Kerry regarding the return of Iraqi Jewish community artifacts that are now on display at the National Archives.

In 2003, U.S. and coalition forces found a trove of Iraqi Jewish religious and cultural artifacts being warehoused in the basement of Saddam Hussein's secret police headquarters, and the U.S. subsequently brought them here to the National Archives for restoration, preservation, and display. However, these artifacts are scheduled to be returned to Iraq where the government will claim possession of these artifacts that were unjustly taken from the Iraqi Jewish community. The U.S. Government must not return those stolen treasures to the Iraqi Government, but instead, should facilitate their return to their rightful owners or their descendants.

Therefore, on behalf of me, Congressman Steve Israel, and over 40 of our House colleagues, we ask you, Deputy Secretary McGurk,

to personally deliver this letter to Secretary Kerry and the Department of State ensure that the Iraqi Jewish community does not get robbed again of its collective memory and treasures. Thank you, sir. The Chair now recognizes herself for 5 minutes.

Two years ago next month, the United States withdrew our last troops from Iraq, and the American mission in Iraq formally ended. Instead of leaving behind a residual force sizeable enough to help maintain the gains we made in Iraq, and to continue to assist the Iraqis as they made the important steps toward democracy, the administration dithered, failed to actively seek a resolution to extend our presence in Iraq, and withdrew completely rather than stay engaged. Yet, shortly after our last soldier left, President Obama addressed troops at Fort Bragg and said, “We are leaving behind a sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq.”

However, what we have seen over the past 2 years, and it has been even more pronounced in the past few months, is that Iraq is far from stable, and it is only getting worse. Increasing sectarian violence, fueled by al-Qaeda in Iraq, AQI, also known as the Islamic state of Iraq in al-Sham, is now at a level not seen since 2008, and has led to rising civilian death tolls.

According to multiple sources, so far this year, there have been over 7,000 civilian deaths, a number that is more than double for all of last year, and there are now an average 63—68, excuse me, car bombings a month, and multiple location attacks are occurring at a much greater frequency. The resurgence of AQI and the Shiite militias threatens to ignite an all-out civil war along ethnic and sectarian lines that could topple the Iraqi Government. The violence may spread across Iraq and Syria, and could enable al-Qaeda to establish a safe haven from which to attack U.S. interests and the interests of our allies in the region. And with the United States no longer there to act as a deterrent, Iran has quickly moved in to fill the void that we have left behind and has been exerting a great deal of influence over Prime Minister Maliki and many of the Shiite factions. This is a very serious cause for concern and a real threat to U.S. national security interest to the region.

Maliki and his government have done little to prevent or stop Iranian arms supplies from being flown over Iraq to Assad and his murderous forces in Syria. I have repeatedly urged the administration to press Maliki to be more proactive in stopping these flights that carry military personnel, arms and equipment to Assad, yet the flights continue.

Another example of Iran’s influence in Iraq is the continued attacks against the people of Camp Ashraf and Camp Liberty, who, despite being guaranteed safety and security from the Government of Iraq and the United Nations, have faced several deadly attacks against their compounds this year. These anti-Iranian regime dissidents have been living in fear every day while agents of Tehran attack their camps without repercussions and without Maliki making any effort to stop the violence. The U.S. must press Maliki and the U.N. to live up to their obligations under the December 2011 Memo of Understanding, and protect the residents of these camps. But there is still a chance to reverse course in Iraq. Next April, Iraq will hold national elections. The U.S. must work with Iraq to

ensure that these elections are inclusive; that they are free, fair, and transparent.

While Maliki was here to visit President Obama, he made it clear that he wants more U.S. military equipment to help fight the growing terrorist threat. The U.S. must not commit to increase security assistance until Maliki and the Iraqi Government show that they are serious about combating the terrorist threat, will provide security to the Camp Ashraf and Liberty residents, and are willing to implement the reforms needed in Iraq to bring democracy and stability while also securing U.S. national security interests.

It is time for the administration to get serious about its commitment to a democratic and stable Iraq, and to increase U.S. influence in Iraq so that it does not even more closely align itself with Iran and our other enemies. And with that, I would like to yield to Mr. Cicilline, if he would like to represent the Democratic side. Thank you, sir.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for convening this hearing along with Ranking Member Deutch. Since U.S. combat troops withdrew from Iraq in 2011, we have seen limited progress in building peace, democracy, and stability. I have very strong concerns about the violence and general unrest in Iraq, especially since Iraqi people have endured considerable hardships.

The United States has worked to assist Iraq in these efforts, but internal and regional issues persist, including threats from al-Qaeda. Unfortunately, these are very real and very serious, especially as we continue to encounter and handle many complicated issues in the region, particularly Iran, and Syria. I believe the United States must work to forge a strong and allied relationship with Iraq as soon as possible, but also recognize the ultimate responsibility of the Iraqi people with stability, prosperity, and peace of their own nation.

I look forward to hearing the perspective of the witnesses we have assembled to discuss the future relationship with Iraq, what we can learn from our actions over the last decade, and how they will help to shape our relationships with Iraq, and other nations in the region. I welcome the witnesses.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Cicilline. Mr. Chabot is recognized.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chair. I think we would be remiss if before I had my opening remarks if we could recognize our former colleague, Congressman Mike Flanagan from Chicago, Illinois, who served his constituents extremely well. Personally, when I first came up here in 1994, he is just one Great American there. Why don't you stand up, Mike. Mike Flanagan. All right.

And now my statement. The United States spent nearly a decade securing and helping to build the foundation of a prosperous and democratic Iraq. Thousands of American lives were lost, billions of dollars were spent. In 2011, when we were preparing for the transition from a Defense Department-led mission to a State Department-led mission, many of us in the Congress expressed concerns that a complete withdrawal of our Armed Forces personnel would be premature because Iraq did not appear to be ready to stand on its own, and that we ran the risk of squandering much of the progress that we had achieved.

Having just returned from a recent visit there back in 2011, I was one of those Members who expressed that skepticism. When President Obama surprised nearly everybody, including our military leaders, and many of our diplomats by withdrawing all of our military personnel while the political situation in Iraq remained dangerously unstable, I am afraid our worst fears are being realized. Two years later, Iraq may well be on the verge of a civil war. I am looking forward to the testimony this afternoon with the hope that the administration can shed some light on its Iraq policy, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Chabot. Mr. Vargas is recognized.

Mr. VARGAS. Thank you very much again, Madam Chair, and Ranking Member for the opportunity to speak here today and for this important meeting. Nearly 2 years ago, as it was said, the United States withdrew our last troops from Iraq. The main territorial, political, and economic divisions within the country remain ripe and unresolved. Increased sectarian violence and the inability of the Maliki government to govern in a transparent and inclusive manner has left a power vacuum all too often filled by al-Qaeda and Iranian influences, and we see Iraq careening toward a civil war. And importantly now, too, the critical lessons that we learned or didn't learn and the insights that we learned in Iraq will be important also as we advance our negotiations with Afghanistan toward a final bilateral security agreement and I do have to ask, as many of my constituents ask, was it all worth it? Was it worth it? Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir. Mr. Wilson of South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you very much for having this hearing today. I am very grateful that over the years of my service I had the opportunity to visit Iraq 11 times. I am very hopeful for the people of Iraq, but I obviously am very concerned, and I certainly hope the administration is making every effort to avoid what we have already heard could be an impending civil war where you have the Sunni-Shiite divide, where you have an extraordinary example of progress that I have observed in the Kurdish region of Iraq; what a model hopefully for the rest of the country to be able to have diversity. It is also personal to me. My oldest son served for a year with the field artillery in Iraq, and he was military police and traveled the country in different convoys. Additionally, my second son has been a doctor serving with the rangers and the SEALS in Iraq, so our family wants success. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank for their service. And I am now pleased to yield 5 minutes for his opening statement to the ranking member of our subcommittee, my Florida colleague, Mr. Deutch.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and thanks for holding this hearing. First, I would like to recognize the Iraqi Ambassador who is here today. Thank you for being here, Ambassador. We look forward to working with you to help to ensure a stable and democratic Iraq.

It has been 2 years since U.S. forces withdrew from Iraq and we would be remiss if we didn't remember the tragic sacrifices that so



many of our bravest have suffered. Eight long years of war resulted in the deaths of 4,500 U.S. troops, more than 32,000 troops were wounded, including thousands who are now living with brain and spinal injuries. Their sacrifices will always be remembered and greatly appreciated. Yet, since the troop withdrawal, sectarian violence has been spiraling out of control with violence at the highest level since 2006. This has left many wondering what exactly has changed in Iraq. Reports indicate that nearly 7,000 Iraqis have been killed this year with almost 1,000 killed in September alone. Many believe the rise in sectarian violence to be a result of efforts by Prime Minister Maliki to consolidate political power at the expense of Sunni and Kurdish opponents.

This perspective, along with the dangerous reemergence of al-Qaeda in Iraq, has contributed to Sunni extremists targeting Shiite communities which in response, has led to government-run security operations in Sunni areas. All of that contributed to a violent cycle that appears to only be intensifying with no immediate solution in sight. Yet, we can't look at U.S. policy toward Iraq in a vacuum. We must also do so in the context of the broader region. The United States has our fair share of challenges in the Middle East. But a constructive relationship with Iraq, one that is united in our fight against extremists and committed to upholding democracy can have significant impact on a region in turmoil.

Iraq can play a critical role in resolving the conflict in Syria, stopping the spread of extremism, preventing a nuclear Iran, and encouraging new regional partnerships. Furthermore, by virtue of its geography and history, Iraq will arguably play the most important role in helping to address the alarming sectarian division between extremist Sunni and Shiite elements that are spreading throughout the region. But I am troubled that Prime Minister Maliki's neutrality in the Syrian conflict, I am worried that Iraq is increasingly susceptible to Iranian influence. Earlier this spring, many of my colleagues joined me in sending a letter to Secretary Kerry that expressed our serious concerns that Iranian flights were continuing to use Iraqi air space to transport weapons to Assad's forces in Syria. While the Iraqi Government responded after months of prodding by grounding several flights, it is unclear whether these Iranian flights continued to go unchecked, and I look forward to hearing whether there has been any progress on this issue.

For the past decade, Iraq dominated U.S. foreign policy. We can't allow it to now disappear into our rearview mirror. The challenges in stabilizing Iraq are great, but I believe the risk of letting Iraq devolve into al-Qaeda's playground are even greater. I recognize that developing an effective and sustainable power-sharing agreement between the Shiite, Sunnis and Kurds is not easy, but we must encourage and promote dialogue. I also recognize that despite Iraq's political challenges, it made drastic improvements in their economy. Iraq is now the second highest oil producer in OPEC and the GDP has increased about 10 percent per year since 2011. These are the kind of important gains that will be crucial to long-term stability.

Another key benchmark in Iraq's future will be the upcoming national parliamentary election scheduled for April 2014. It is my

hope that elections will bring a new political order that works to govern inclusively and effectively. I look forward to hearing what the State Department is doing to help maintain an inclusive political process and to strengthen democratic institutions.

Deputy Assistant Secretary McGurk, I hope that today you will be able to provide greater insight into the future of U.S./Iraq relations, and while there is no doubt, the current security situation is absolutely untenable, this relationship cannot be built solely on arms sales. We can strengthen economic and cultural ties that will help to provide a more prosperous future for all Iraqis, and we must promote a process that results in a lasting and equitable power-sharing agreement that is fair to all Iraqis. Madam Chairman, again, thank you for holding this hearing and I look forward to our discussion.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Thank you for an excellent opening statement. We turn to Mr. Weber for any opening statement he would like to make.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Madam Chair. I have none at this time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. We like to hear that.

Mr. WEBER. I do, too.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Let me see. Mr. Meadows, is that who is next to you there? A good looking guy.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you, Madam Chair. Very briefly, I just wanted to thank you for coming to testify. Obviously, we need to use all of our diplomatic tools necessary to avoid a civil war and prevent the spread of violence there in Iraq. And even though we have the oversight responsibility and connections with the U.S. Ambassador over key Iraqi developments and the sale of arms, et cetera, I look forward to your testimony on how we can best accommodate and work with what is happening on the ground there, work with the Iraqi people in a spirit of friendship and cooperation, and I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir. Mr. Schneider is recognized.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I will be brief so we can get to our panel. But as we sit here 2 years after the last troops left Iraq, Iraq continues to be a linchpin in the Middle East, in many respects influencing the fortune of its neighbors. Thus far, Iraq has not used this opportunity well, and has engaged in behavior that shows regional instability rather than security. In April, I joined with many of my colleagues here in the Foreign Affairs Committee in writing a letter to the Prime Minister Maliki of Iraq asking that he do more to stop the illicit arms trafficking and Iranian weapons to the Assad regime in Syria.

It remains unclear if Iraq continues to perform inspections of civilian aircraft, and may continue to promote regional conflict by allowing these arms to flow from Iran into Syria. I look forward to hearing from our panel what more can be done to work with Iraq to promote U.S. foreign policy goals in the region, including working toward long-term stability and security in Iraq. Thank you, Madam Chair, I yield back my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir. Mr. Rohrabacher is recognized.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. Madam Chairman, Iraq is now an ally of the Iranian Mullah dictatorship. The Maliki

Iraq regime is at best an accomplice to the murders of unarmed refugees at Camp Ashraf, and is a regime that has a disdain for the American sacrifice that gave them the sacrifice of our blood and our treasure that freed them from Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. These ingrates should not receive one penny, not one red cent of American aid, and today we have with us, Madam Chairman, someone who exemplifies the actual horror story that it is under this regime.

We have Afzal—and I hope I pronounce this right, Afzal Emadi, whose brother was among the 52 killed at Camp Ashraf and has a cousin who is now being held hostage by the Iraqi regime. He resides in my district and I would like him to stand now if he could. And we are sorry for your family, and they are in our thoughts as we preside over this hearing. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir. Ms. Meng is recognized.

Ms. MENG. Thank you, Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Deutch, and our distinguished panelist. It has been 2 years since the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. And while we have done much to give its fledgling democratic government a real chance of success in the upcoming 2014 national elections, there are still many challenges. Sectarian violence and regional conflicts remain rampant while our ability to work with the Iraqi Government through the office of security operation has greatly diminished, and with rising Iranian influence in Iraq, the need for a comprehensive and clearly defined foreign policy is vital.

I am confident that today's discussion of these issues will prove valuable in determining the appropriate role of the U.S. presence in Iraq going forward. Regarding the issue of Iraqi Jewish artifacts that are currently on display in the National Archives, I want to especially acknowledge and thank Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen, Congressman Israel, and Senator Schumer for their leadership on this issue. Rescued from Baghdad in 2003, the collection of ancient artifacts include letters, books, and personal photos that were left behind by Jews after World War II who experienced extreme anti-Semitism, including harassment and violence.

It is imperative that these artifacts are returned to the descendants of the Jewish community from which they were wrongly confiscated, and not by the Iraqi Government. We want to ensure justice for the Iraqi Jewish community. I look forward to hearing Mr. Brett McGurk's testimony on these issues. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. And now our subcommittee is so pleased to welcome a gentleman who has an impressive resume, Mr. Brett McGurk, who is Deputy Assistant Secretary for Iraq and Iran at the State Department. Prior to this, Mr. McGurk served as a special advisor to three U.S. Ambassadors to Iraq in the Obama administration, and as director for Iraq and Special Assistant to the President as well as Senior Director for Iraq and Afghanistan in the Bush administration.

Welcome, Mr. McGurk. We look forward to your testimony and your full and complete statement will be made a part of record. You are recognized for 5 minutes, sir, welcome.

**STATEMENT OF MR. BRETT MCGURK, DEPUTY ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY FOR IRAQ AND IRAN, BUREAU OF NEAR EAST-  
ERN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Mr. MCGURK. Thank you, Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutch and members of the subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me to discuss the situation in Iraq. My testimony this afternoon will focus on our efforts to safeguard U.S. interests in this important country bearing in mind our obligations to build on all that America sacrificed over the past decade. The challenges are daunting. Internally and regionally, pressure continues to build. The next year in Iraq may be pivotal, particularly with national elections now set for April 30, 2014. I look forward to working closely with this subcommittee as we navigate this difficult terrain and ensure that core U.S. interests are protected.

Our policy is focused on these core interests and organized along the following five lines of effort. First, maintaining a unified and Federal Iraq; second, supporting increases in the production and export of oil resources; third, promoting Iraq's strategic independence and regional integration; fourth, countering the reemergence of al-Qaeda in Iraq; and fifth, supporting Iraq's democratic institutions and trajectory.

I will review briefly our efforts along these tracks measuring progress from Secretary Kerry's March visit to Baghdad. After that visit, the Secretary asked me to travel to Iraq and I have made four trips since with another scheduled for next week. I hope therefore to provide an overview of the situation as viewed from here in Washington, as well as on the ground in Iraq. The first line of effort is maintaining a unified and Federal Iraq. The focus here primarily is on relations between the central government in Baghdad and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, or IKR. When the Secretary visited Iraq in March, tensions were at a dangerous boil. Kurdish ministers and parliamentarians were boycotting Baghdad, and Kurdish Peshmerga forces faced off against the Iraqi Army in disputed boundary areas. Intensive diplomatic engagement led to a detente with both sides pulling back and disputes returning to the political arena where they belong. Since then, seven joint committees have been formed between Baghdad and Erbil. Prime Minister Maliki has visited Erbil and President Barzani of the IKR has visited Baghdad for the first time in 2 years.

The second round of effort, importantly, is maintaining the increases in production and export of oil resources. Iraq is estimated to have the fifth largest proven oil reserves in the world. Last year it surpassed Iran as OPEC's second largest producer. Earlier this year, Iraq surpassed Iran as a leading exporter to India and China, which has helped enforce robust international sanctions on Iranian oil exports. Today we are working with the Iraqis on a strategic vision for their national infrastructure, with export routes from the south in Basra, to the Red Sea and through Turkey to the Mediterranean. We are also working with all political blocks to pursue a long-term win/win agenda, with Iraq as a 6–10 million barrel per day producer with revenue sharing pacts and export routes to unite disparate interests in Iraq and regionally.

The third line of effort is promoting strategic independence and regional integration. Iraq shares a 400-mile border with Syria and

a 900-mile border with Iran, which we learned from hard experience can be difficult to control. In addition, at the time of Secretary Kerry's visit to Baghdad, tensions with Turkey, lingering disputes with Kuwait, and strained relations with the GCC threatened to further isolate Iraq and widen the door to nefarious influences from other neighbors. Thus, beginning in March, we launched a quiet but active campaign to ease tensions with Turkey, settle accounts with Kuwait, strengthen ties with Jordan, and accelerate efforts to reintegrate Iraq with its Gulf neighbors.

These efforts have seen some success. In June, the U.N. Security Council voted to normalize relations between Iraq and Kuwait. This week, Turkey's foreign minister visited Baghdad for the first time in 2 years and both countries agreed to restore positive ties. Jordan and Iraq are now coordinating efforts to develop a pipeline from Basra to Aqaba, and next week, DOE will host a strategic dialogue between United States, Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt.

Iraq has also participated recently in regional military exercises in Jordan and Bahrain. While these are positive steps, Iraq's full reintegration with Gulf partners will be influenced by its stance in the conflict in Syria, which is a daily topic of our discussion with Iraqi leaders.

The fourth line of effort is countering the reemergence of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Everything I have just mentioned depends on Iraq stemming the rising levels of violence seen over the last year. So far this year, nearly 6,000 Iraqis have been killed compared with 4,400 who were killed in each of the past 2 years.

Nearly all high-profile mass casualty attacks, the vehicle and suicide bombs are perpetrated by terrorist groups now led by Iraq's al-Qaeda affiliate, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL. ISIL is led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, a specially designated global terrorist under U.S. law who is now based in Syria. Earlier this year, Baghdadi announced a campaign of terror to include attacks against Iraqi security services, government targets, and civilians. Since then, we have seen upwards of 40 suicide bombers per month in Iraq, targeting playgrounds, mosques, markets, and funerals, in addition to government sites from Basra, to Baghdad, to Erbil. These attacks, in turn, have given rise to new calls from Shiite extremist militias, which had remained dormant since 2011.

ISIL has benefited from a permissive operating environment due to inherent weaknesses of Iraqi security forces, poor operational tactics, and popular grievances which remain unaddressed in Sunni areas.

Fortunately, we have defeated this enemy before through intelligence-driven security operations and mobilizing popular forces against extremist networks. Iraqi leaders today are working to develop this same approach, with our support, but not to our troops, and this remains a daily topic of our conversation with them from the prime minister on down.

Finally, the fifth line of effort is supporting Iraq's democratic institutions and trajectory, isolating extremists will be near impossible if the political process is not moving forward. The Iraqi Parliament just last week passed a long-delayed law to govern national elections which are now set for April 30, 2014. We have made clear to all Iraqi contacts that these elections must be on time, well-pre-

pared, and designed to produce genuine and credible results. In the meantime we are engaged with all parties and blocks to facilitate progress in Parliament, and a package of laws to advance national reconciliation.

In conclusion, vital interests are at stake in Iraq. Hearings like this are critically important to ensuring that we are doing all we possibly can to safeguard those interests and to ensure that we have built on the sacrifice we have made over the last decade. Thank you again for inviting me to speak with you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of McGurk follows:]

**Testimony of Deputy Assistant Secretary Brett McGurk  
House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa  
Hearing: Iraq**

**November 13, 2013**

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutch, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to discuss the situation in Iraq. My testimony this afternoon will focus on our efforts to safeguard U.S. interests in this important country, bearing in mind our obligations to build on all that America has sacrificed over the past decade. It is in the memory of those lost that we continue to make every effort to move Iraq forward, and in line with U.S. interests.

The challenges are daunting. Internally and regionally, pressures continue to build, exacerbated by a resurgent terrorist network led by al Qaida's Iraq-based affiliate, now known publicly as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (AQ/ISIL). The next year in Iraq may be pivotal, particularly with national elections now set for April 30, 2014. I look forward to working closely with this Subcommittee as we navigate this difficult terrain, and ensure that core U.S. interests are protected.

Our policy in Iraq is focused on these core interests, and organized along the following five lines of effort:

1. Maintaining a unified and federal Iraq
2. Supporting increases in production and export of oil resources
3. Promoting Iraq's strategic independence and regional integration
4. Countering the re-emergence of al Qaida in Iraq (AQI)
5. Supporting Iraq's democratic institutions and trajectory

My testimony will review our efforts along these tracks, measuring progress from Secretary Kerry's March 24, 2013, visit to Baghdad. After that visit, the Secretary asked me to travel to Iraq, and I have made four trips since, with another planned for next week. I hope to provide an overview of the situation as viewed from Washington, as well as on the ground in Iraq, where extraordinary diplomats, led by Ambassador Beecroft, are serving our Nation with courage and distinction.

**Maintaining a Unified and Federal Iraq**

This first line of effort is focused primarily on relations between Baghdad and Erbil, the capital of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR). As a recent study by the

Rand Corporation notes, tension between Arabs and Kurds has long been identified as among the greatest drivers of instability in Iraq. Should these tensions ever lead to conflict, it would have dire consequences for U.S. interests in Iraq and throughout the region. Accordingly, we have worked for a decade to dampen potential flashpoints and develop political structures for dispute resolution, pursuant to the framework established in the Iraqi constitution.

When the Secretary visited Iraq in March, tensions between the IKR and the central government in Baghdad were at a dangerous boil. Due to a series of disagreements over the Iraqi budget, and in the disputed boundary areas of northern Iraq, Kurdish ministers and parliamentarians were boycotting the central government, and its Peshmerga forces faced off against Iraqi Army units – with both sides daring the other to open fire.

Fortunately, intensive diplomatic engagement led to a detente, with both sides pulling back and disputes returning to the political arena where they belong. On June 10, Prime Minister Maliki visited Erbil for the first time in two years; then, on July 7, IKR President Barzani visited Baghdad, for the first time since late 2010. As a result of these visits, the IKR and the central government established seven joint committees with mandates to address the most difficult issues of federalism: security cooperation, revenue sharing, and balancing powers between the central and regional governments.

Since then, there has been progress in the area of security cooperation, and we are working to facilitate serious discussions on revenue sharing, to help ensure that all Iraqis – in all parts of Iraq – benefit equitably from Iraq's national patrimony. This is the vision enshrined in the Iraqi constitution, and we believe it is critical to Iraq's long-term stability. These revenue sharing discussions may intensify in the weeks ahead, as the Iraqi cabinet, and then parliament, begin debate on a \$150 billion national budget.

The U.S. will stand ready to work with all parties, as appropriate, to narrow areas of disagreement and build on areas of common ground.

#### **Maintaining Increases in Production and Export of Oil Resources**

Maintaining a united and federal Iraq – and ensuring the predictability of global energy markets – will require sound development and management of Iraq's abundant natural resources. Iraq is estimated to have the fifth-largest proven oil reserves in the world. Last year, it surpassed Iran as OPEC's second-largest oil



producer. It has also surpassed Iran as a leading exporter to India and China, which has been essential to enforcing robust international sanctions on Iranian oil exports, while also maintaining market stability. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), Iraq may account for nearly half of anticipated growth in global oil output over the current decade, with revenues approaching \$200 billion per year.<sup>1</sup>

In short, Iraq's hydrocarbon sector is vital to U.S. interests in the region, and its development is essential to Iraq's long-term stability. These shared interests have led to a close and ongoing partnership as to how Iraq can best manage its abundant resources to generate increasing revenues and align the interests of disparate groups in a unified and federal Iraq. For example, four export platforms that came on line south of Basra in 2012 – each with capacity to export 900,000 barrels per day – were the result of joint efforts beginning in 2007 to address serious deficiencies in Iraq's infrastructure.

Today, U.S. policy is focused on a similarly ambitious – and achievable – vision: a strategic pipeline from the super giant oil fields in Basra (with 80 percent of Iraq's proven reserves) to the Haditha refinery in Anbar province; southwest through Jordan to the Red Sea; and connected to the north, Turkey and the Mediterranean. These three export routes – the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, and Mediterranean – will build redundancy into Iraq's national export infrastructure, facilitate prosperity to all parts of the country, and align the interests of regional partners in a stable and prosperous Iraq.

Coupled with this vision is a revenue sharing agreement to ensure that revenues are shared equitably, and, longer term, new legislation to manage the hydrocarbon sector and ensure legal predictability to market entrants. The United States wants to see Iraqi oil from all parts of the country – north to south – reaching global markets as soon as possible, and in a manner that reinforces stability. Iraq today is producing 3 million barrels-per-day, but the IEA projects under its central scenario potential increases to 6 million barrels-per-day by 2020, and 8 million barrels-per-day by 2035, with revenues over this period approaching \$5 trillion.<sup>2</sup>

The United States does not take sides in the internal disputes regarding the distribution of revenues and management of oil resources. Instead, we focus on the principles enshrined in the Iraqi constitution and the maxim that it is always better

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<sup>1</sup> See Iraq Energy Outlook, *International Energy Agency*, Oct. 9, 2012, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See id., at p. 11.

to peacefully divide a large pie than to fight over a small one. Thus, we are focused on increasing production and exports, overcoming the hurdles companies face when operating in Iraq, reducing bottlenecks, and lending technical expertise as appropriate under our Strategic Framework Agreement. These efforts will accelerate over the coming months, including with a joint coordination committee on energy cooperation early next year.

### **Promoting Strategic Independence and Regional Integration**

Regional tensions have a direct impact on Iraq's internal stability. Political blocs, leaders, and non-state entities, including militias and terrorist groups, often find external sponsorship and support. Iraq also shares a 400-mile border with Syria, and a 900-mile border with Iran, which, we learned from hard experience, can be difficult to control. Tensions in recent years with Turkey, combined with lingering Gulf War era disputes with Kuwait, and lack of regular engagement with other Gulf Cooperation Council states, threatened to further isolate Iraq – and thereby widen the door to nefarious influences from other neighbors.

Beginning in March, the United States launched a quiet but active campaign to ease tensions with Turkey, settle accounts with Kuwait, strengthen ties to Jordan, and accelerate efforts to reintegrate Iraq with its Gulf neighbors. These efforts are important to bolstering Iraq's independence, and, when combined with economic and security initiatives, aligning its long-term interests to ours.

These efforts have seen some success. Iraq and Kuwait settled key accounts dating to the 1991 Gulf War, and in June the U.N. Security Council voted unanimously to finalize a process to normalize relations between both countries. Two weeks ago, the Iraqi cabinet voted to open Kuwaiti consulates in Erbil and Basra. In April, the United States began a trilateral process with Iraq and Turkey, focused on mutual interests. This week, Turkey's Foreign Minister visited Baghdad for the first time in two years, and both countries agreed to restore positive relations.

Jordan and Iraq, with our support, are coordinating efforts to develop the pipeline project from Basra to Aqaba. In July, we began a strategic dialogue with Jordan, UAE, and Iraq, to focus on mutual interests, including security, energy, and economic interests. This group will convene again next week in Abu Dhabi, with the addition of Egypt. Iraq has also participated in recent regional military exercises, including the Eager Lion exercise in Jordan this past summer, and the international mine countermeasures exercise in Bahrain.

While these are positive steps, we continue to emphasize with Iraqi leaders that full re-integration with Gulf partners will be influenced by Iraq's stance on the conflict in Syria. Iraq has sought to retain independence, expressing concern from the beginning about global jihadist groups that operate in the western parts of Iraq and eastern Syria. While these concerns are legitimate, it is equally legitimate to question Iraq's independence given Iran's ongoing use of Iraqi airspace to re-supply the Assad regime. The frequency of flights is down since the Secretary's visit in March, but Iraq must do more to tighten its inspection procedures. We also remain watchful of Iranian efforts to use Iraq to circumvent international sanctions.

Iraq's independence, finally, can be strengthened through ties to the U.S. private sector. We are working to promote U.S. exports to Iraq and working with U.S. companies – including Ford, Boeing, General Electric, and Citibank – doing business in Iraq. On September 18, Iraq launched a \$357 billion five-year National Development Plan, with projects identified across multiple sectors: energy, health, agriculture, education, and transportation. The U.S. embassy provided technical advice for this program, and we hope where possible to match U.S. businesses with Iraqi development needs. This will be a key focus of "Iraq Business Week" to be held here in February, with Iraq's Minister of Trade leading the Iraqi delegation.<sup>3</sup>

### **Countering the Re-Emergence of al Qaida in Iraq**

Everything I have just mentioned depends on Iraq stemming the rising levels of violence seen over the past year. I was present in Iraq during the peak of the civil war in 2006 and 2007, and saw first-hand the devastating impact it had on Iraq's fragile social cohesion. The violence made politics and economic growth near impossible, as security became the first and only demand of the population.

To address the security situation, it is important to precisely diagnose the source of the most devastating attacks. Iraq since the 2003 invasion has never been peaceful. In 2011 and 2012, among the quietest years on record, there were 100 attacks per week, with 4,400 casualties per year. Nearly all of these attacks were perpetrated

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<sup>3</sup> The Iraqi parliament earlier this year ratified a bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with the United States. Iraq Business Week will focus on implementing the TIFA and matching Iraqi development needs with U.S. businesses. U.S. trade with Iraq last year increased to \$21 billion, and major deals – such as the \$5 billion deal to provide Iraqi Airways with thirty Boeing 737s and ten 777s by 2017 – have closed with U.S. advocacy. Such economic statecraft initiatives, together with educational exchanges and related programs under the Strategic Framework Agreement, remain central to our engagement with Iraq.

by terrorist groups, led by al Qaida in Iraq (AQI). AQI is led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order 13224. We believe Baghdadi fled to Syria last year, expanding AQI's base of operation, and changing its name to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (AQ/ISIL).

Baghdadi early this year announced a campaign of terror against Iraq to include attacks against security services, government targets, and Shi'a civilians. In March, AQ/ISIL launched a coordinated attack with five suicide bombers against the Iraqi Ministry of Justice building in Baghdad. In June, scores of well-trained and professional fighters assaulted the Abu Ghraib prison complex, freeing hundreds of inmates, including mid-level al Qaida leaders. Since then, we have seen upwards of 40 suicide bombers per month, targeting playgrounds, mosques, and markets, in addition to government sites from Basra to Baghdad to Erbil.

AQ/ISIL has benefited from a permissive operating environment due to inherent weaknesses of Iraqi security forces, poor operational tactics, and popular grievances, which remain unaddressed, among the population in Anbar and Ninewa provinces. It has also benefited from a sanctuary across the porous border in Syria, control of lucrative facilities there, such as oil wells, and regular movement of weapons and fighters between Syria and Iraq. The suicide bombers, we believe, are foreign fighters who travel to Syria to join AQ/ISIL, and are then directed toward Iraq for operations.

We have defeated this enemy before, through a combination of devastating and relentless security operations, and mobilizing popular forces to isolate – and in some instances, fight – AQI networks. Today, we are working with Iraqi political and security leaders to develop a similarly holistic approach. We are also emphasizing the urgency, as the targeting of civilians in recent months by AQ/ISIL has given rise to dangerous calls to reconstitute Shi'a militias outside the control of the Iraqi government. Thus far, militia activity has been localized, but if suicide attacks continue, we are likely to see increasing calls for self-protection from local neighborhoods, and more room for militias to develop roots among the population.

While Iraqi security forces will never match what U.S. forces achieved at the height of the war, they have proven capable of conducting effective operations when provided sound intelligence. In recent months, Iraqi civilian and military leaders have increasingly looked to us for advice and information sharing. This is partly to ensure – with pressure from us – that operations are targeted and precise, to avoid detaining innocent civilians. We have made clear to Iraqi commanders

that some of their tactics over the past six months have been self-defeating, and it is time to draw on the lessons that we learned together five years ago.

Among the central lessons was mobilizing the Sons of Iraq (SOI) to control the streets and work in coordination with government security forces. This was a regular topic during Prime Minister Maliki's meetings in Washington two weeks ago, and he pledged to more than double the salaries of the SOI, to flush resources to areas where AQ/ISIL is operating, and to ensure close and regular coordination between Iraqi security forces, local provincial councils, and tribal structures, particularly in Anbar and Ninewa provinces.

In turn, we made clear to Maliki and other Iraqi leaders that the fight against terrorists and militias will require a holistic – security, political, economic – approach. We believe we now have a common roadmap for combatting this problem over the coming months, while anticipating inevitable setbacks. We have also made clear to Iraqi leaders that they must make extra efforts to protect the residents at Camp Liberty in Baghdad, while also pressing the international community to help with this urgent humanitarian situation.

Finally, while security operations may not be the lead element of a holistic strategy against AQ/ISIL, they remain essential. In previous efforts with U.S. forces in the lead, we worked to ensure – through targeted and relentless military operations – that AQI could not establish a sanctuary or staging presence in Iraq. Today, we believe AQ/ISIL is trying to establish camps and staging areas in Iraq's western border regions. Iraqi forces are working to target these camps. But they lack the equipment for relentless and effective operations in remote areas, and over the past few months, we have seen a number of unarmored helicopters shot by heavy machine guns, and pilots – who we trained – maimed and killed.<sup>4</sup>

To combat this threat more effectively, the Iraqis hope to purchase U.S. equipment. We are confident that this equipment, pursuant to a holistic strategy that we have developed together, can be used effectively and with precision against AQ/ISIL targets. The Iraqi delegation led by Prime Minister Maliki, in a joint statement

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<sup>4</sup> By way of recent examples, on October 2, an unarmored helicopter providing support to ground troops on a mission against AQ/ISIL targets was downed by heavy machine gun fire. Four crew members (2 pilots, 1 gunner, and 1 engineer) were killed. A week earlier, two unarmored reconnaissance helicopters providing over-watch for an ongoing operation were forced to land after being engaged by a concealed PKC machine gun. Based on our existing relationships with Iraqi pilots, reviews of operations have generally confirmed proficiency and adherence to rules of engagement.

following their meetings at the White House, pledged “strict compliance with U.S. laws and regulations on the use of such equipment.” By working with Congress, we further believe that sales of U.S. equipment will strengthen a long-term strategic relationship with the Iraqi military – through training, spare parts, joint exercises, logistics, and interoperability with U.S. forces and regional partners.

Time may not be on our side. Iraq has acute demands, money to supply those demands, and while it prefers U.S. equipment and the multi-decade relationship that comes with our foreign military sales program, strategic competitors are now lining up to meet Iraqi demands if we cannot deliver. Case in point is the delivery earlier this month of four Russian Mi-35 attack helicopters. We believe that it is in America’s strategic interest to supply military systems to Iraq, as opposed to Russia or other competitors, and we look forward to working with Congress to address all outstanding questions with respect to foreign military sales.

#### **Supporting Iraq’s Democratic Institutions and Trajectory**

Shortly after Prime Minister Maliki’s return to Iraq last week, the parliament broke a deadlock to enact the law to govern national elections in 2014. These elections are now set for April 30, 2014. This will be the third election for a full-term national parliament, but the first since the departure of U.S. forces in 2011. Thus, it is a critical test of Iraq’s democratic process, and we have made clear to all Iraqi contacts that the elections must be on time, well prepared, and designed to produce a genuine and credible result. Our Embassy team is working closely with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to ensure preparations remain on track.

Iraq earlier this year held provincial elections in 14 provinces, and parliamentary elections in the IKR. Results of these elections have shaken local power dynamics. Prime Minister Maliki’s State of Law coalition, for example, secured pluralities in Baghdad and Basra, but was then outmaneuvered in formation of local councils and lost governorships. In the IKR, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) lost ground to the upstart Gorran party, which came in second behind the dominant Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), led by IKR President Massoud Barzani.

In the Sunni majority provinces of Ninewa and Anbar, provincial elections had been delayed due to security concerns. We were clear from the outset that this decision was unwise, and pushed to ensure the elections took place, which they did on June 20. The outcome led to a status quo in Ninewa, with the brother of Speaker Osama Nujaifi retaining the governorship; but new leaders emerged in

Anbar, and these new leaders, with our encouragement, are engaging the central government. Prime Minister Maliki met the new Anbar Governor, Ahmad Khalaf al-Dulaimi, before traveling to Washington, and we expect to see additional meetings soon, with a focus on coordinating security and political efforts.

At the national level, we are engaged with political leaders, parties, and blocs, to facilitate progress in parliament on a package of laws that are necessary to address legitimate grievances of the Sunni community. First in this package is ending once and for all the process known as “de-Ba’athification,” which has grown so politicized that it now encourages the very forms of intolerance it was intended to root out. We are encouraged by a law that passed the cabinet earlier this year with a time limit on the de-Ba’athification process, but the law has since stalled in parliament, and at present lacks support from any Shi’a or Kurdish blocs – each of whom want to add measures to address the concerns of their own communities.

We will continue to encourage all sides to find a compromise to pass this important law, as we did most recently with respect to the election law. At the center of these efforts will be Prime Minister Maliki, who, as the leader of the country, has responsibility to govern inclusively, and to build bridges from his Shi’a constituency to Sunnis and Kurds, even where doing so might engender political risk and backlash. For Iraq to progress, he must lead.

There have been some encouraging signs at the national level, such as a 14-point Charter of Social Peace signed in September by leaders across the religious and political spectrum. This document, while symbolic, calls on its signatories to combat “militias and terrorists and all dimensions” – e.g., by addressing grievances that allow extremists to take root. It further calls on appropriate delegation of authority to provincial and local leaders, as well as arrangements to address the crimes of the Ba’ath Party, without impugning ordinary citizens who may have had tangential party connections.

It will take generations for Iraq to overcome its legacy of dictatorship, wars, and isolation. We must be realistic about what is achievable. At the same time, we must continue to press all sides to compromise on issues that continue to divide Iraq. Where the leaders come together, such as through the Social Peace accord, we will exert every effort to seize the opportunity and press for concrete outcomes. Where they remain apart, we will continue our efforts to narrow areas of disagreement. In the end, the Iraqi people will have an opportunity to hold their national leaders accountable with elections now less than six months away.

**Conclusion**

This overview does not do justice to the complexities we face in Iraq and the uncertain terrain we must navigate together. What is certain is that vital U.S. interests are at stake, and hearings like this are important to discuss the enormous challenges ahead, and to ensure that those interests are safeguarded. Thank you again for inviting me to speak with you. I look forward to your questions.



Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, sir.

And before I begin my questions, I would like to recognize Lieutenant Colonel Greg McCarthy, and Matt Zweig, two Iraqi war veterans who serve on our Foreign Affairs Committee. We thank you for your service.

Mr. McGurk, thank you for your testimony. You testified in your written statement that it is legitimate to question Iraq's independence given Iran's ongoing use of Iraqi air space to resupply the Assad regime. Why is Iraq not doing more to stop the overflights to Assad? Is the Maliki government trying to use this issue as a means to try to coerce the U.S. and to provide Maliki more arms and advanced weapons systems? Also, you testified in your statement that the State Department is watchful of Iranian efforts to use Iraq in order to circumvent international sanctions. To what extent has Iraq been successful in that?

Are there also fighters flocking into Syria to fight on—well, could be both sides—but really all sides of that conflict? There are reports that suggest that there are members of the Maliki government who are allowing some Iraqis to cross into Syria to join the fight. Why is the Iraqi Government unwilling to stop these extremists from joining ranks with those fighting in Syria, and does the Maliki government's refusal to denounce Assad show that his ties with Iran run deep, and that he does not want to upset the regime in Tehran?

And lastly, at the start of the hearing, I handed you an envelope filled with letters and a video, and I would like you to address the issues in the letters. Will the State Department reevaluate its decision to hand these Jewish artifacts over to the Iraqi Government, and instead, work to facilitate the safe and rightful return of these important artifacts to their rightful owners or their descendants?

Also, the plight of the residents of Camp Ashraf and Camp Liberty has been tragic, but the situation is getting worse. This year we saw several deadly attacks, including the previously mentioned attack at Ashraf in September that left 52 dead, and seven hostages captured. What has the U.S. done to ensure that the Government of Iraq lives up to its obligation to protect these residents, and why have we not insisted that the thousands of T-WALLS needed to protect the camp be installed?

To date, I am told that only 192 of the 17,500 T-WALLS have been installed. This is woefully inadequate and more need to be installed by the end of this year. And I respectfully request and would appreciate a regular progress report to our subcommittee on the installment of these protective T-WALLS. Thank you, sir.

Mr. MCGURK. Madam Chairman, first I will make sure that your letter gets to the Secretary, and this is a daily topic of conversation with all of the issues in Iraq. But let me kind of go through issue by issue. I will start with the Jewish archives. As you know, the archives are now on display at the National Archives. I went to see them last week. It is really a remarkable display, both about the Jewish heritage and the tragic history of this community in Iraq. We are also in daily conversation with the Iraqi Government and with the Jewish community here in Iraq. This morning, I was in communication with Rabbi Baker from the American Jewish Coun-

cil. I have also been in regular conversation with Ambassador Faily who is here, representing the Iraqi Government.

As you know, we have a commitment under an agreement from 2003 to return the archives to Iraq next summer, by the end of next summer. We have paid for Iraqi archivists who are now here training with the National Archives to make sure that these archives are preserved and protected.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank you, sir. I know other members will follow up, but my time is so limited, about Iran, and Syria, and Camp Ashraf.

Mr. MCGURK. I will stay just briefly on the archives. We are open to discussion about discussing the disposition of these archives and I know the Ambassador agrees with that. And I am happy to discuss that further. On the MEK, this is an issue that I am tracking every single day on the tragic attack on September 1st. I went to Iraq shortly thereafter. We worked very hard to get the remaining survivors off of Camp Ashraf that were not safe. I visited the residents and the survivors at Camp Liberty. We are determined to keep them as safe as possible.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The T-WALLs?

Mr. MCGURK. Yes, thank you. I just spoke with Ambassador Beecroft this morning. There are about 1,400 large T-WALLs now. We want to get as many T-WALLs in as possible. Some of this comes down to logistics. Some of it comes down to getting the right contractor. Some of it comes down to getting the right median place for where the T-WALLs go. But there is no excuse. The T-WALLs need to move into the camp.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, and on Iran's influence in Iraq, and Syria.

Mr. MCGURK. Iran has influence in Baghdad. We have influence in Baghdad. Other states in the region have tremendous influence in Baghdad. The issue of overflights, Madam Chairman, I would really welcome the opportunity to come and brief you in a classified setting. I can go into some detail on the numbers and the flights.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I welcome that. Thank you, and my time is up, but we will do that, sir. Thank you. Mr. Deutch is recognized.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I would actually like to get back to the issue of the archives. You said that you are open to discussion. These are just a couple of observations, and I appreciate the attention that you paid to this issue already. Iraq, Babylon was the center of Judaism for 1,000 years, and these documents, tattered as they were, found now a decade ago, are, according to the agreement that was reached with the Provisional Authority, were supposed to be sent back to a place where the number of Jews, numbers perhaps in the single digits. Many of the documents are very personal in nature, records of the community, things that are of real value to the members of the community and their descendants who simply aren't there.

So help me understand. I understand what the agreement was. You also said you are now open to discussion. Can we explore that a little bit and if you can just continue where you left off? What discussion can we have, and what can we do? What would be the holdup to ensure that these items that are so personal to the com-

munity that is no longer living in the country can actually reside with the community where it now lives?

Mr. MCGURK. All I will say right now is that first, I think everybody should go see the exhibit, and if you need the technicians who actually traveled to Baghdad in the heart of one of the worst periods of the war in 2003 to preserve these materials, it is really a truly remarkable effort by the National Archives. The State Department is proud to be a partner with them in that effort. They will be on display at the Archives. They will then be on display in New York. The commitment that we made in 2003, and that was a legal agreement to allow us to get them out of Iraq to preserve this important material. Without that agreement, the material never would have been preserved. They will be on display in New York and then under this commitment, they will transfer to Baghdad in the late summer of next year.

All I can say is that we have an agreement with the Iraqi Ambassador here to begin a conversation about longer term loans here in the United States to make sure the people can view them. But that will be an ongoing course of discussion. It is November now. We have until the end of next summer so we do have some time to discuss this. We have heard very loudly and clearly the concerns from the community. We have listened to those and we have taken them to heart and we will see what we can do.

Mr. DEUTCH. And I would just add to that, there are, as I understand it, some 2,700 books, tens of thousands of documents. It certainly seems that it would be possible to be able to have the ability to highlight the community that existed in Iraq in some fashion while still ensuring that the bulk of these records continue to stay with those who are the most closely affiliated with them, and whose lives they reflect.

So I appreciate that, and to the extent that that conversation is ongoing, there are a lot of us here who offer ourselves up to be engaged in it. So I thank you for that.

I also would like to just follow up. There was an op ed in The New York Times that coincided with the visits to the U.S. Prime Minister Maliki blamed the growing sectarian violence on al-Qaeda's increased influence. And 2 weeks ago, the Washington Post reported growing concern over an al-Qaeda affiliated group of the Islamic State of Iraq in Syria that is described as more extreme than Jabhat al-Nusra. So what can the U.S. do to strengthen Iraq's ability to counter these threats, and how do we foster the kind of dialog that ultimately is necessary for regional cooperation, in order to prevent the growing extremism, and can that be done at all and how do we lead it?

Mr. MCGURK. Thank you. It is a critical question. One of the vital interests we face in Iraq is the reemergence of these al-Qaeda groups. We had very intense discussions with the prime minister when he was here last week about approaching this with a holistic strategy. The way we went at this in 2007, 2008, was by mobilizing popular forces, the Sons of Iraq in Anbar Province, for example. This cannot only be a security-driven exercise. We believe we now have an agreement with the Iraqis in terms of how to go about this problem, isolating these groups. But make no mistake, the Iraqis need security assistance. As I put in my written testimony, I de-

scribe what is happening now. We can help the Iraqis identify some of the al-Qaeda camps, and the camps do exist in the western regions of the country, but they are not able to effectively target those camps. They have unarmored helicopters. When they fly an unarmored helicopter to these camps, the helicopters are getting shot down. Pilots that we have trained are getting killed. Over the course of this year, about 938 members of their Iraqi security forces have been killed in action.

So this is a very serious problem. While the security element of the strategy is not the lead element, it is an essential element. And that is why we need to help the Iraqis as best we can. We are helping them with information sharing and we are talking about training some of their forces in Jordan, and working with regional partners. The visit of the Turkish prime minister to Baghdad was very important. The strained relationship between Baghdad and Akra was having an impact on the internal environment of Iraq.

So getting that relationship on a better track is very important, and we are going to keep working to isolate these groups. In terms of sectarian violence, the violence that we have seen in 2011, and 2012; there were about 100 attacks a week and they were primarily conducted almost entirely by the Sunni extremists, al-Qaeda-type groups. What we have seen this year, the violence has gone up. And again, 40 suicide bombers a month. That is compared with about 5 a month in 2011 and 2012. And those suicide bombers are having a devastating effect because they are able to go in and target restaurants, and playgrounds, and just having a psychological effect on the country, and that is leading for a renewed call for Shia extremist militia to form to protect local neighborhoods, and this is extremely dangerous. We discussed it with the prime minister in great detail. He agrees that this is a very serious problem. He also agrees that we have to go about this politically, economically, and with information-driven, intelligence-driven security operations. So we think we have made progress about a common strategy to go after this, but this is going to be a day-by-day and very hard work.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Deutch. Mr. Chabot is recognized.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. McGurk, you mentioned in your testimony that Iraq may account for nearly half of the anticipated growth in global oil output over the current decade. Can we be sure that the existing agreements over oil production will be honored in the event of more domestic instability in Iraq, and can you elaborate on how Iraq's oil production will be affected in the event social unrest continues to fester?

Mr. MCGURK. Congressman, it is an excellent, excellent, question, because the more the security situation deteriorates, that jeopardizes the ability of Iraqis to get that oil on to global markets. I want to say what we have been doing with the Iraqis is trying to focus them on using their abundant natural resources in a strategic way. The problems that beset Iraq are not problems that developed over the last year, even last decade, or 100 years. They go back, in some cases, 1,000 years.

We are talking with the Iraqis and having a very good conversation with regional partners about how to harness their natural re-

sources to align the interests both internally and within the region in a stable unified and Federal Iraq. For example, having strategic pipelines that run from Basra to the Haditha refinery in the heart of Anbar Province, and then south through Jordan to the Red Sea, unites the Shi'a in the south, the Sunnis in Anbar Province, Jordan's real intense need to energy resources. Connecting that pipeline further, and this is a discussion that Foreign Minister Davutoglu had with the prime minister in Baghdad last week, from the Haditha refinery to the Basra refinery, also in Saladin Province and then to Turkey, unites the interest of Turkey all the way down to the south and southern Iraq.

And that is something that the Turkish foreign minister also pointed out. We are also working with the Kurds and with the Iraqis in Baghdad to make sure this is done in a strategic way, and done with revenue-sharing pacts that all Iraqis can share in their national patrimony. But this is very difficult. The maxim we use and it is one that is really enshrined in Iraqi constitution is that all of the oil is owned by all of the Iraqi people, but that it is better to peacefully divide a large pie than to fight over a small one. Right now Iraq is producing about 3 million barrels a day. That is more than it has produced in almost 20 years. But there are projections from the International Energy Agency that if Iraq gets its act together and does some things right, it should be producing 6 million barrel as day by 2020, and we want to help the Iraqis get there.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. Let me shift gears here. While Iraqi Christians find themselves in an increasingly hostile environment, the Kurdish region was seen as a safe haven for Christian refugees in Iraq. However, a number of bombings against Christians in the Kurdish region have changed the security situation for Christians and with reports of discrimination, Christians no longer feel safe even in the Kurdish region. What is the administration doing to help Christians and other minorities in Iraq and what is the Maliki government doing to protect Iraqi religious minorities?

Mr. MCGURK. Thank you, a very important question. And at the State Department, also we are focused on this every single day. I try to meet with the Iraqi Christian communities here in the United States. When I am in Iraq, I try to meet with the Christian leaders. Our Ambassadors engage with them on a regular basis. On my last trip, I met with Bishop Warda who is in Erbil in the Kurdish region and we asked him, what do you really need from us? And he needed some more facilitation with the Kurdish Government there to resolve some land disputes and they have now set up a joint commission to do just that.

The prime minister met with Archbishop Sako, the main Christian leader in Iraq in early October to talk about the threats to the Christian community. The real problem in Iraq right now is that every community is under tremendous threat. The casualties that have taken place this year, are a threat to everybody, but the Christians in particular, and some of the other minority communities such as the Shabaks and the Yazidis are under a real threat from these al-Qaeda groups.

We are talking with the Iraqi Christian community here and also Christian leaders in Baghdad about what we can do to harness local forces to protect their local communities and working with the

Iraqi Government to get resources into those communities. And we have made some progress over the last 3 to 4 months, but I just, our eyes are wide open at how difficult this problem is, and again, the more that this al-Qaeda network gains strength and gains roots in Western Iraq, the greater the threat will be. That is why we have to go after that in a very serious way.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. Mr. Connolly is recognized.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the chair. What is the relationship, Mr. McGurk, in your view, between the government in Tehran, and Mr. Maliki's government in Baghdad?

Mr. MCGURK. It is a relationship that is really multifaceted. I mean, look at that border. Iraq is going to have cultural, religious, economic relations with Iran. That is something we recognize. Where we try to draw a line is any sort of security relationship with Iran and we have had some success in that area. My experience over the last decade in working with Iraqis, whether Shi'a, Sunni, Kurds, Christians everybody, is that there is really no love lost between Iraqis and Iran. They remember the very long Iran Iraq war in the 1980s, and that is really felt very deep in the psychology. Iraq also feels—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Can I interrupt you 1 second? And you would say that that view is also shared by the Maliki government despite the Shia nature of that government?

Mr. MCGURK. Sometimes it is a mischaracterization to say that Shia in Iraq are linked to Shia in Iran. But the Shia in Iraq and Grand Ayatollah Sistani in Najaf and his philosophy of quietism, is totally 180 degrees opposite to the philosophy of Khomeini and Khamenei in Tehran which is kind of clerical rule. Sistani's view is that more of a democratic tradition, which we would recognize and which there should be separation from the top clerical leadership in the government. That is something that most Iraqis adhere to, and it is a critical distinction to really working with this problem.

Make no mistake, Iranian influence in Baghdad is very strong. It is there every day. They have had a presence in Baghdad for 10 years. They have had the same people there that have built relationships that are very deep, and it is something we need to deal with. We have to recognize they are going to have a relationship. It is drawing a line at the malign and the far east influences from Iran which we are trying to do.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you. I think that is a really important distinction. I am glad you got it in the record. Kurdistan, the Kurdish area in the north has actually sort of had protected autonomy for—going back to right after the first Gulf War of the United States. Is that not correct?

Mr. MCGURK. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And it has actually flourished as a result, not only of our protection, but of its own enterprise and initiatives, is that correct?

Mr. MCGURK. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And has largely been spared some of the violence in the rest of Iraq, both pre-, during, and post-U.S. invasion?

Mr. MCGURK. Yes, correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Recently, the Kurds seem to have come to an agreement with the Government of Turkey to build a pipeline directly to Turkey to provide, I think, largely natural gas, is that correct?

Mr. MCGURK. The pipeline—there is a debate whether it is going to go directly to Turkey or whether that is going to plug into the existing pipelines that exist already. The oil pipeline is going to plug into the existing Iraq/Turkey pipeline which is on the Kurdish side of the—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Right, but the Turks and the Kurds have been talking about a direct pipeline that would actually bypass the national system in Iraq, if I understand it correctly.

Mr. MCGURK. There has been a lot of discussion—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Right.

Mr. MCGURK [continuing]. A lot of press reports and industry reports, but I think actually looking at where the pipelines are going, right now the oil pipeline is going to plug in on the Kurdish side, and we have not seen a clear indication that there is going to be an independent pipeline.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, those same reports you are referring to, Mr. McGurk, also report that the United States Government has been pretty active, if not animated on this topic, discouraging the bypassing of the national pipelines because your point earlier, it would diminish the Nation's cohesion that we are trying to seek in Iraq. Would that be inaccurate?

Mr. MCGURK. That is not entirely accurate and thank you for letting me address that. It is our position that as much oil and natural gas from the Kurdish region should get on the global markets as soon as possible, full stop. That is our position. We look at this very closely, though, and want to make sure that it is done in a way that does not have repercussion, or backlash that could jeopardize getting to the point where I talked about in my testimony that Iraq is a 6–10 million barrel-a-day producer, though that is a long-term vision, and this is a very politically fraught issue in Iraq. We don't take sides.

We look to the Iraqi constitution as the baseline. We try to make sure that this is being done and managed in a strategic way, but it is our position we want as much oil and gas from the Kurdish region getting on the global markets as soon as possible.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And presumably, one other factor is we also are not unsympathetic to our long-time ally, Turkey, in trying to secure its own fossil fuels.

Mr. MCGURK. Absolutely right, which is why we are big supporters of a strategic pipeline going from Basra all the way up to Jahan in the Mediterranean through Turkey and having Kurdish pipelines plug into that national infrastructure.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. MCGURK. It is a win/win vision.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Connolly. Mr. Wilson is recognized.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you Madam Chair. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here. As I mentioned, I am very, very grateful that I have had two sons serve in Iraq, Army, Navy. I am grateful that we

have even had Members of Congress, my colleague, Congressman Kinzinger right here has served twice in Iraq. The American people have shed blood on behalf of the people of Iraq, and we want success and hope for success.

Additionally, I have had the opportunity to visit the country 11 times. I have been very impressed by the people I have met. And again, I am hopeful for the country. But a real tragedy has been the murders at Camp Ashraf. Since December 2008, before our Government turned over the protection of the camp to the Iraqi Government, Prime Minister Maliki has repeatedly assured the world that it would treat the residents humanely and protect them from harm. Yet, it has not kept the promise, as 111 residents have been murdered in cold blood and more than 1,000 wounded in 5 attacks, including the September 1st massacre. What is the United States doing to prevent further attacks and greater loss of life in terms of ensuring the safety and security of the residents?

Mr. MCGURK. Congressman, first let me say thank you for your service, and your family's service. Speaking for myself and my team, who have spent many years in Iraq and have known friends of ours who we have lost in Iraq, it is something that we think about every day, and it inspires our work and our determination to do everything possible to succeed under very difficult circumstances.

Regarding Camp Ashraf and Camp Liberty, the only place for the MEK and the residents of the Camp Liberty to be safe, is outside of Iraq. Camp Liberty is a former U.S. military base. We lost Americans right nearby there as late as the summer of 2010. We lost a number of Americans to rocket fire and indirect fire attacks in our Embassy compound, one of the most secure facilities in the country as late as the summer of 2010. That is when we had about 60,000 troops in the country doing everything we possibly could to hunt down the rocket teams that we knew were targeting us.

There are cells in Iraq, we believe, directed, inspired from Iran, which are targeting the MEK. There is no question about that. And the only place where an MEK can be safe is outside of Iraq. That is why the State Department, the Secretary, has appointed a colleague of mine, Jonathan Winer to work this issue full-time, to find a place for them to go. Right now, there are about 2,900 residents at Camp Liberty, and Albania has taken in about 210. Germany has agreed to take in 100 and that is it.

We need to find a place for these people to go, it is an urgent humanitarian issue, and an international humanitarian crisis. And I went to the camp to meet with the survivors and to speak with the families. And I promised to do everything I possibly could to get them to safety. And in the meantime, it is incumbent upon the Iraqi Government to do everything it possibly can to keep them safe, and that means the T-WALLs and sandbags and everything else. But the only place for the residents to be safe would be outside of Iraq. Since the tragic attacks at Camp Liberty on September 1st, 1,300 Iraqis were killed, 52 people were massacred at Camp Ashraf.

This is a tragic, horrifying act. But since then, 1,300 Iraqis in the country have been killed. The country is incredibly dangerous, and



for the MEK to be safe they have to leave Iraq and we want to find a place for them to go.

Mr. WILSON. Well, I appreciate your commitment to that. After the September 1st massacre, the State Department called for an independent investigation by the United Nations, 74 days on nothing's been done, let alone an independent investigation. Could you tell this committee whether any independent probe has been carried out or not? If so, by whom, and what is the finding? If not, why not? Five attacks have been launched against the residents and not one person has been arrested. What do we do to maintain promises of protection?

Mr. MCGURK. Congressman, shortly after the attack, we worked with the United Nations to make sure that they got a team up to Camp Ashraf within 24 hours of the attack to document exactly what happened because there were a lot of stories of what happened. They went there, took photographs of the bodies to make sure that it was documented as to how these people were killed and there is no question about it.

We have looked very closely at all of our information. I know I have had the opportunity to brief some members of the subcommittee in a classified setting, which I would be pleased to do again to update you on the information that we have. We did call for an investigation and for the U.N. to be involved in this process. The U.N. was also involved in making sure the survivors got out of Camp Ashraf and out of harm's way to Camp Liberty.

Again, Congressman, I would welcome the opportunity to come discuss with you in a classified setting exactly everything we know about what happened on September 1st.

Mr. WILSON. And I have been to Camp Liberty many times, but I obviously am concerned. I appreciate your commitment and indeed, every effort should be made to protect those citizens. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Wilson. Mr. Sherman of California is recognized.

Mr. SHERMAN. I thank the chair and ranking member for the opportunity to participate in this hearing. Maliki wants our weapons, yet he allows planes to go from Iran to Syria taking murderers, and thugs, and the IRGC and weapons with them. He says that he can't defend his own air space, but he certainly has not invited Turkey, Saudi Arabia or the United States to defend that air space from these murderers that fly leisurely across Iraq and do their killing in Syria.

I want to focus on finances. How much money are we scheduled to give Iraq this year? How much do they get from oil and are they pumping oil as quickly as they can or constraining their production in accordance with OPEC rules?

Mr. MCGURK. In terms of money, we are not really giving Iraq much money at all anymore, our assistance levels have gone down dramatically.

Mr. SHERMAN. But it is still well over \$1 billion?

Mr. MCGURK. No, I believe the most recent request is now under \$1 billion. It has gone from about \$1.5 billion last year to Fiscal Year 2013 to about \$180 million. And I can again brief you on the glide path overall presence.

In terms of oil, it is actually quite the opposite, the Iraqis done everything possible to get as much oil on to international markets as possible.

Mr. SHERMAN. So they are pumping—

Mr. MCGURK. And the Iranian oil minister last week said that it was an unfriendly act what the Iraqis were doing in terms of getting that much oil on to Iraqi markets. As Iranian oil has come down, thanks to our sanctions by at about 1 million barrels a day, Iraqi oil has gone up by 800,000 barrels a day which has really helped stabilize global markets.

Mr. SHERMAN. As it would be in production.

Saddam Hussein's government incurred tens of billions of dollars of borrowings, Saddam would have wanted to call it gifts from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and others in the Gulf which he used to fight the Iran-Iraq war. Has the Iraqi Government made payments on this debt, renounced the debt or does it just kind of sit on their balance sheet with no particular explanation?

Mr. MCGURK. These are the debts the Iraqis owe?

Mr. SHERMAN. This is debts of the Iraqi Government to the Governments of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait incurred during the Iran-Iraq war.

Mr. MCGURK. Some of those debts, as you know, have been forgiven through Paris club commitments, other debts have not. I would have to get you the numbers.

Mr. SHERMAN. Please get me information on that.

Now I would like to join with Mr. Wilson and others in focusing on Camp Liberty. You had 101 members of the MEK there, 52 were killed, that is a 50 percent casualty rate for roughly a million times for the casualty rate that ordinary Iraqi civilians have faced in the unfortunate deaths that have occurred in Iraq.

Included among those who died was the brother of Assaf al-Mia who I believe is in our audience today. The State Department has issued a statement saying, well, the Iraqi Government had nothing to do with it, which to me is an incredible indictment. They have an obligation to protect the residence of the camp, and according to our own State Department, did nothing. In fact, the assailants had to get past several checkpoints in order to carry out their murders. When we were at Camp Liberty, or when we were in Iraq, Camp Liberty had 17,000 of those T-WALLs that protect those who live in the camp from missiles and mortars.

Now there are less than 200. What have we done to make it clear to Maliki that he has to put back the T-WALLs and provide the defense or will he keep the people there subject to attack and then disclaim any responsibility when they are, in fact, attacked?

Mr. MCGURK. I just want to make clear what the U.S. position is, we looked at this very closely in terms of no credible evidence going all the way up to the top of the Iraqi Government in terms of this particular attack.

Mr. SHERMAN. But you have no credible evidence that they lifted a finger to stop it?

Mr. MCGURK. Iraq, as I said in my testimony, is an extremely violent place and a couple of months before the Ashraf attack the Abu Ghraib prison complex was attacked by hundreds of al-Qaeda-linked fighters. And they took over the prison or, at least almost

everyone in the prison. We think in that attack, there was no foreign knowledge from the highest levels of Iraqi Government, there was probably some complicity at a local level, and we think the Ashraf attack was similar.

Mr. SHERMAN. Complicity at the local level?

Mr. MCGURK. I think it is a reasonable assumption there was some.

Mr. SHERMAN. What about complicity with the failure of Maliki to deploy the 17,500 T-WALLs?

Mr. MCGURK. The T-WALLs—as you know, when the residents move into Camp Liberty, it had the same T-WALL configuration we had to protect troops, and the residents, and I can understand why, says this looks like a prison we want to get the T-WALLs out, and so all the T-WALLs came out. Given the threat they are under the T-WALLs have been moving back in.

There are different numbers on the numbers of T-WALLs. I was just at the camp about a month about or so ago, or a couple of months ago, and saw with my own eyes. And I want to get more T-WALLs into the camp. I spoke with Ambassador Beecroft about this just today, and there is an agreement with the Iraqi Government, we have to get the right meeting and place the right people there for where the T-WALLs are going to go, and I think we will see more T-WALLs moving into the camp, but we are continuing to work as hard as we can.

Mr. SHERMAN. We have fewer than 200, we need 17,500. I yield back.

Mr. DESANTIS [presiding]. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California. You are lit up.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. All right. Well, where do we start? I just, \$880 million in aid after at least of the money we will be expending for Iraq after spending almost \$1 trillion over a decade, and 6,000 lives for which I have seen no gratitude whatsoever from senior members of the Iraqi Government, nor from the Iraqi people. Why do we care anymore about whether or not al-Qaeda is operating and killing some of their soldiers? Why do we care? They don't care for us, they are not grateful for what we have already done. Why should we be giving even more money to a country that is headed by people of that inclination?

Mr. MCGURK. Congressman, thank you. I just want to clarify, the \$880 million is our operating request, the current budget for sustaining our presence in Iraq and doing various things we are doing there.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. That is right. So why should we do that?

Mr. MCGURK. Well, we have a vital interest at stake in Iraq, whether you measure it from al-Qaeda, whether you measure it from the oil production, whether you measure it from just the overall stability of the region. I think withdrawing from Iraq in terms of our overall diplomatic presence in what we are doing would have a really devastating consequence to our longer-term interest. I would point you to an important op ed the Iraqi Ambassador wrote on our Veterans Day thanking all the sacrifice in Iraq. I would like to see more as well.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I will have to say that independently, I have never had an experience, I have been in and out of Iraq a number

of times and been with a number of Iraqis. Not once that I have someone independently without being told to come up to me and say how grateful they are ever to suggest that. I would suggest it is a big stretch to say that things going on in some province in Iraq because there is some al-Qaeda element there murdering other Iraqis that we need to get involved in that any more than he have in the past. We are pouring more money down the rat hole, but also it really makes a mockery, this whole thing makes a mockery of the commitment we have had in the past.

Let me just ask, you believe them from what you have said that there was legitimate security reasons that those T-WALLs have not been put up at Camp Liberty?

Mr. MCGURK. No, I do not think they are legitimate security reasons the T-WALLs have not been put up.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. It sounded to me when I was listening, and I listened very closely to what you said, that we can't blame the leadership in the Maliki leadership for the lack of security at Camp Liberty?

Mr. MCGURK. No, in fact, my conversation from Maliki on down is you need as many T-WALLs into that camp as possible, without any excuse. Full stop. So you may have heard me say something different. I want—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. If I am misinterpreting what you said. Now, tell me this, those troops that came into Camp Ashraf murdered 52 unarmed MEK refugees, you hold that this was done by a rogue element in the Iraqi army or do you think that Maliki regime is complicit in this murder?

Mr. MCGURK. I don't believe it was a rogue element. I think a lot of this goes back to the background of the situation. Camp Ashraf was seen as a forward operating base to the MEK—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I don't need a background on it. I am trying to find out—it is clear that we had Iraqi soldiers going in there murdering people who were unarmed, tying their hands behind their back and then blowing their brains out. This is an atrocity, it is a crime against humanity. Now I don't need a background to find out the background on Camp Ashraf. Do we hold the government responsible or was it a rogue element? And if it was a rogue element in the military, what has the Maliki regime done to deal with that?

Mr. MCGURK. Congressman, I would really welcome the opportunity to come speak to you in a classified setting and tell you everything we know about this attack including, who committed the atrocity.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. You know, I am not asking for all the information that you know, I am asking who we are holding accountable, and we aren't. Clearly, we are sending a message to the Maliki government that it is okay, because we are not doing anything about it. We have—here is a picture of a gentleman who used to work up here, I submit this now, Mr. Chairman, for the record. A gentleman who used to work right here on Capitol Hill representing the MEK, and we saw him on many occasions. And guess what, here is his body at Camp Ashraf where they have murdered him, brutally tied his hands behind his back and blown his brains out.

We need to make sure—if we excuse this by lack of attention, we are sending our own message as to what values we have and we are sending other dictators and terrorists a message as well about American weakness. I am not satisfied with what this administration is doing on this issue.

And one last note, Mr. Chairman, and that is, look, these people are under attack, I think at the very least, it is my opinion right now in this, we should take the people in at Camp Liberty, let's just take them in.

Is there a reason why—I am writing legislation that would grant these people asylum, obviously their lives are at stake and obviously, they are now unarmed refugees. Is there some reason that we should not give them political asylum?

Mr. MCGURK. I will say—

Mr. DESANTIS. The gentleman's time has expired. Do you want—maybe you can finish up on one of the other—I am going to move it along. I don't see anybody here from the other side of the aisle, so I will recognize somebody from this side of the aisle. Next person in the queue is Mr. Kinzinger from Illinois.

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Mr. McGurk, thanks for being here and thanks for your service to your country. I know it is not always easy but we appreciate what you are doing.

Just a couple of questions as Mr. Wilson so kindly mentioned, I am a veteran of Iraq and saw quite a bit of sacrifice from the American side in terms of what was created there. In fact, I think one of the bravest political decisions, and frankly, military decisions that has been made in 50 years was the surge in Iraq. I heard a lot of people, including frankly the current administration oppose the surge, thinking that the war in Iraq is lost. I heard a very powerful person in the Senate say that the war is lost, it is time to go home. And we saw that despite that, a tough decision was made to surge. The surge, the addition of 20,000 additional troops helped, but what really helped was the message that the United States, the enemy knew we would never be defeated on the battlefield and we won't be, the focus that we are committed.

My good friend, Mr. Rohrabacher, I have to take slight exception, I think there is quite a bit at stake in Iraq. I think a resurgent al-Qaeda is extremely concerning in Iraq. I think resurgent al-Qaeda in a very frankly potentially powerful and oil rich Nation is not just not in the interest of the Iraqi people, it is not in the interest of the United States, it is not in the interest of the free world. And it is especially not in the interest of the 6,000 people that gave their lives to help create what was created over there.

I was shocked frankly at the end of 2011 at the complete pullout of U.S. forces. I thought we could have negotiated much harder for residual force in Iraq. I think had we left the residual force in Iraq, we would not be seeing the kind of violence we do now. So that said, I don't have a time machine and I can't go back in time and convince the President that Iraq was in our interest to leave a residual force there.

I do have a couple of questions about the resurgent AQI presence in Iraq. The President's claimed numerous times that al-Qaeda's been decimated, but that is not the case. Frankly anywhere around the globe or in Iraq, we are seeing sectarian violence in Iraq today

at levels that we saw when I served there, which was completely incomprehensible. Has the administration, in your mind, underestimated the growth reached in capacity of the al-Qaeda and its affiliates in Iraq?

Mr. MCGURK. Congressman, first thank you for your service, and with all that you have seen, your experience is really critical to getting this right now. And so I think this dialog is very important. I don't want to get into whether it is underestimated, I am really focused on my job on where we are now and we face a real problem. There is no question that ISIL is growing roots in Syria and in Iraq. And the one thing with this Iraqi Government, they want to go after this threat and we want to help them. We want to help them do it in an effective way.

As you know from your experience, the reason the surge worked was not just the troops, it was the strategy. And the reason the sons of Iraq and the awakening worked was because of really three things: We trusted them, we paid them, and they believed they are going to win. Right now the Iraqis are telling us and the Minister of Defense, Sa'doun al-Dulaimi, who is from Anbar province. They will trust them, they can give them resources, but right now, they don't think they are going to win because the al-Qaeda groups have better weapons and better resources, quite frankly, in some of these areas. So that is a problem we are trying to address.

Mr. KINZINGER. Okay, thank you. In shaping the future policy toward Iraq has the administration taken into account recent operations launched by AQI's resurgent effort including breaking the walls the soldiers harvest campaign in which vehicle-borne IEDs have been used in staggering numbers?

Mr. MCGURK. In my testimony, I discussed, I didn't use the exact words, but that is Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's strategy, he announced it and then he carried it out. The breaking walls campaign was about prison attacks and security forces, and others—his campaign was about attacking government targets including the Ministry of Justice building in downtown Baghdad in March. They attacked the intelligence headquarters in Erbil on September 21st. And they have attacked, particularly Shi'a civilians week after week after week trying to spark that cycle of sectarian violence that we saw at the worst phases of the war. So far, the Shi'a militia response has been localized and has not had a strategic effect but is something we are watching very closely.

Mr. KINZINGER. Well, thank you. And just in the last 30 seconds, I have, I just want to say for the record, I hope that the administration, and again, we can go back in time and argue whether we should have left a residual force, I have made my point on that. But I hope that in the future, we are acting very proactively to help the Iraq Government root out terrorism. I don't know what that necessarily will involve, there are some things that I don't want to say here, but I think an Iraq that falls prey to al-Qaeda, to lawlessness, frankly like we saw in the mid 2000s, would be tragic for the United States, for the whole region and for not only our reputation, but for a lot of people who just want to live in peace. And again, thank you for your service. Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Madam Chair, I yield.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [presiding]. Mr. Kinzinger, we are proud of your valuable service. Thank you so much. We are very proud, we have many vets in our subcommittee, and we thank each and every one of them. Mr. DeSantis was one of them. Thank you for chairing while I was out. And Mr. DeSantis is now recognized.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I had kind of cut off your answer when I was chairman because we were way over time, so do you just want to answer the question Mr. Rohrabacher had asked you about the administration's position on asylum for these folks?

Mr. MCGURK. I will defer to the lawyers on some of this, but as a former terrorist organization, even though they are no longer designated an FTO, there are legal restrictions in terms of our ability to bring a large number of the group into the United States under existing laws. There are processes that are under discussion, and I am happy to discuss that with you in follow-up. But a legislative fix on some of these issues is something that we would look at.

Mr. DESANTIS. When I was in Iraq, this was kind of right when the surge had started, back when I was on active duty. And as you know, you were part of that, you had AQI ascending, 2006 was a disaster. You also had Quds force and the Shi'ite militias wreaking havoc in other parts of Iraq. And the surge was very successful at quelling that, but then as I read what is going on now, it seems like a lot of what is going on is reminiscent of those years. So can you speak to, I know you talked about Iran does have a lot of influence particularly in Baghdad generally, what is the influence of Quds force and how are they interacting with the Iraqi Government, if at all?

Mr. MCGURK. And again, you would recognize from your experience, Congressman, if you charted out right now the levels of violence on just al-Qaeda violence, suicide bombers and vehicle bombs, we are at a level not seen, as the chairman said earlier, since 2008. But if you look at overall violence, it is still down substantially and the reason for that is because the Shi'a militia violence which we were seeing in those days has not really responded in reciprocal tit-for-tat way. So that is really significant. If we see that type of response, it will be very concerning.

The Quds forces we see right now, they do not want Iraq to be destabilized. We do think however that they are working with certain Shi'a militia groups, including the top Hezbollah, Subil Hok and some of these other groups that you know well. And they are really focused, though, on a localized kind of mission-by-mission basis.

All I can say is that in our conversations with the Iraqis, we share as much information as we possibly can and make very clear that they need to push back against this. Prime Minister Maliki does remind us that he did take on the militias in Karbil and Basra, and that he is ready to take them on again if necessary. But this is something that we just need to keep pushing.

The Iranians have done very maligned things in Iraq, particularly when we were present there. Right now it looks like they don't want to have a destabilized Iraq, but they are also responding to demands from particularly the Shi'a community for self-protection in ways that might not be particularly helpful.

Mr. DESANTIS. So in terms of AQI, and I take your point about the level of violence not reaching those 2006 levels which is good, even though it has risen. Back then you had foreign fighters coming into Iraq fighting as a part of AQI. Now we know Syria is kind of a magnet for a lot of these folks. So is it safe to say that most foreign fighters are now going to Syria who were the Sunni-aligned foreign fighters? And if that is the case, are they going through Iraq, or are some of these AQI fighters in Iraq, I guess they are playing a pretty big role in facilitating those folks into Syria?

Mr. MCGURK. The suicide bombers we believe are all foreign fighters, nearly all of them are foreign fighters, they are coming through the ISIL networks, and they are coming from Syria into Iraq. So we think what happens there are these young guys who are brainwashed to go fight a global Jihad. They show up in Syria, if you can fire a rifle you go fight, if you are a mechanic, you fix a truck, and if you are just indoctrinated, you go be a suicide bomber. And about 40 of them now a month are being directed toward Iraq. And the suicide bombers again, as I said, are having a real devastating effect.

In terms of foreign fighters from Iraq going to Syria both—you have a youthful population, you have an underemployed population, and they are all watching this conflict unfold on YouTube with particularly gruesome videos. And that is having a militarizing, radicalizing effect, both within the Sunni community and the Shi'a community. That is one reason why my colleagues on the Syria side of the policy House here are trying to work so hard to settle that issue down.

Mr. DESANTIS. And then my final question is does the Iraqi Government have a relationship in any way with Hezbollah?

Mr. MCGURK. In terms of a formal relationship, none that we have seen in a formalized way.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank a lot. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. DeSantis, and we saved the best for last. A person who just knows that is the way it is. So pleased to yield 5 minutes to Judge Poe of Texas.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Madam Speaker or Madam Chair. I have been to Iraq a lot, I have seen a lot of people in Iraq, and I have met with Maliki. I was with Mr. Rohrabacher, we met with Maliki and we asked him this one question: Can we go see the people at Camp Ashraf and he said, absolutely not. In fact, he got so incensed that we asked that question when we were on a helicopter flying to the north to see the Kurds, he went to the State Department and asked us to leave the country, we were kicked out of the country.

So when you see him get a little emotional and me as well, here we are giving billions to a country where the Prime Minister refuses to let Members of Congress see what is taking place in Camp Ashraf, that is the background. Five attacks on Camp Ashraf and Liberty, five, over a period of years. Not one criminal has been brought to justice, not one. We don't even know their names or who they are. If the Iraqis were serious about investigating they would at least bring in somebody. If those investigators worked for me when I was a prosecutor they would have been fired several attacks ago.



These people that are here, working people, Americans and they are concerned about people they love in Iraq. And they constantly are losing friends and family members to attacks. Meanwhile the United States, I am not sure what we are doing. I now understand that not any of the witnesses have been talked to about the latest attack. These are real people that are killed, and I am sorry for the graphicness of this poster but this has happened at Camp Liberty where the people were in the clinic and they were assassinated, they were tracked down and murdered.

Now we would think, being the freedom-loving country we are, that we would be opposed to this type of activity and we would be a little bit more to pressure it because it is our responsibility. You have made the comment that we are not taking these people into the United States because they used to be a foreign terrorist organization, but the State Department, through the Secretary of State, can waive that as has been done with 12 previous people who came in.

When I talked to other countries about why don't you take these folks from the MEK, you know what the first thing they say is? United States is hypocritical. They say people ought to take them but you won't take any of them. Got a good point. When we talk to the Germans and the French and the Brits, the people in the Netherlands that they ought to take former MEK members, they say, well, you are not taking any of them. Good, it is an excellent point.

I find it hard to believe that the Iraqi security forces were unaware of this attack when they had to go through numerous checkpoints to get to the place where they murdered these folks. The Iraqis are responsible for guarding them, they were missing in action. They all went on a donut break at the time that these homicides occurred, they are always missing.

And there is a debate about the seven that were taken and captured. I have become a real good fan of the French foreign affairs minister, especially with the last situation where he stopped this bad deal with Iran. But in a letter to some of his people in the Parliament, he makes the comment that as far as he is concerned, these seven are still in Iraq. My question is, have these seven people been rescued to your knowledge, no matter where they are?

Mr. MCGURK. No.

Mr. POE. Has anybody in the State Department interrogated the survivors as far as a criminal investigation going on? Have we seen in all of the investigators that we have, or any investigators to talk about who happened, what did these people look like, et cetera, et cetera?

Mr. MCGURK. We have turned as much information as we possibly can to find out where these seven people are. I would be happy, as I have done with some members of the subcommittee, to brief you in a classified setting.

Mr. POE. That is not my question. My question is have they been asked specifically about the murders in the camp that they survived, about who they were, what they looked like, what they said, what language they were speaking, have they been interrogated about those basic criminal investigation questions?

Mr. MCGURK. We have asked our contacts with the MEK that we deal with to put their experts and those of information in touch with our experts, particularly at our Embassy to connect some of the dots.

Mr. POE. We have waived 12 and allowed them to come into the United States, why haven't we waived that for people?

Mr. MCGURK. Congressman, I want to be very precise in my language, when I mention that a legal fix would help given the FTO designation. We are deliberating internally about our policy regarding entry into the United States, a decision has been made that is why I cannot discuss that further here.

Mr. POE. Well, it is the law, is it not, that the Secretary of State can waive that under the current law right now, that is not any big secret.

Mr. MCGURK. There are mechanisms in which a limited number would be able to come into the United States, yes.

Mr. POE. So what do we tell these folks, that freedom-loving folks that are just in a place where they don't want to be, we won't take them, we can't get other countries to take them. And do you know what they are waiting for, the next attack, if we don't hold Maliki accountable. I just want to make this comment. I don't know if you have seen this letter or not, but 44 of us, 22 Democrats and 22 Republicans have sent a letter to the President of the United States saying no more money to Iraq until there is accountability for the murders in Camp Ashraf. Have you seen that letter?

Mr. MCGURK. I have seen that letter, yes.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. You have to end the same way you always end.

Mr. POE. And that is just the way it is.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. I tease, we saved the best for last with Judge Poe, but now we have the best for last on the Democratic side, my good friend from Texas, Sheila Jackson Lee. I am going to let her take a breath here before she is recognized. Ms. Jackson Lee is recognized.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank the chairwoman for her indulgence and as well as the ranking member for his indulgence as well. I would say, Mr. Secretary, many of us have been down this road before. And I must say that, I will say that in engaging the administration, I have received the 2 o'clock a.m. phone calls, I have seen phone calls from the envoy who was in Iraq on these crisis issues. And so I can say that I know that the heart of the administration is in the right place. I also know that there are families who have not been able to be engaged with their loved ones, there are families who have seen their loved ones dying in bloodshed they have not been able to protect.

There have been promises made as the camps have been moved from one place to the next where we have thought that that would have been a safe location, a safe house, and come to find out the most recent attack, bloody attack that we have experienced has really had our ire be raised.

Now let me just say this, I, along with, I know my colleague, the chairwoman during the heat of the Iraqi war, we have gone over many times. We have met with Maliki, we were the supporters of

Iraq standing on its feet. We were the supporters, she had one position about the war, I had another position about the war, I opposed the war, but we were collectively supportive of Iraq being able to get on its feet, and Iraq being able to have a constitution. I was engaged in the discussions about women being included in the constitution. I take no back seat to trying to give Iraq every opportunity to be the kind of human rights, dignified democracy that they allege that they want to be, to allow everyone to live in dignity. This is not happening.

What I want to focus on, as Mr. Wilson, Mr. Poe, Mr. Rohrabacher, on Camp Ashraf, all of them to put it in the way of my advocacy for the administration, for Secretary Kerry and the enormous work that is being done, and my hope for the success of his work, but there are hostages in Iraq that we must have now. There is documentation that those hostages are there by our French allies, by the United Nations and other supportive groups and information.

I can't imagine with the wealth of sophisticated intelligence authorities that we have, that we have funded, who have a vast array of information about Americans cannot pinpoint where starving Iranians, loved ones whose families are trying to save their lives after being on a hunger strike for 73 days. So I would ask this question of you, already knowing about your heart and your concern, I will not judge you, I already know that you are committed to getting this right. Will you, will you demand of Maliki not next week, not months from now, but can we expect in the next 48 hours a call to the head of the Government of Iraq demanding the release of these hostages and demanding for their release now, or the documented undeniable evidence that they are not held within the bounds of Iraq.

Second, would you be engaged with, or the Secretary be engaged with, and I have spoken to Secretary Kerry, I know his heart, with Maliki to demand the security of those in Camp Ashraf for now and forever until an ultimate solution of relocation to their homeland, a place of where their relatives are, or where they desire to be. Mr. McGurk, thank you for your testimony here today and I thank the gentlelady for yielding. I am short on this time, but I am hoping I will hear from you in a moment.

Mr. MCGURK. Congresswoman, thank you and thank you for your engagement on all of these issues. I know we have had conversations at particularly difficult times. I want to thank you personally.

We can't pinpoint where the people are, and I would like to follow up with you on that. They are not in Iraq, the seven people. But I will guarantee that in my conversations with Maliki on down, the safety and security of Camp Ashraf, Camp Liberty of where the residents are, the Iraqi Government needs to do everything possible to keep those people safe but they will never be safe until they are out of Iraq. And we all need to work together, the MEK, us, the committee, everybody, the international community to find a place for them to go.

There is now a U.N. Trust Fund, we have donated \$1 million and we are asking for international contributions to that fund for countries like Albania that don't have resources but are willing to take

the MEK in, and we need to press foreign capitals to take them in because until they are out of Iraq, they are not going to be safe. And we don't want anyone else to get hurt, we don't want any more Americans to get hurt in Iraq, and we don't want any more residents of Camp Liberty to get hurt in Iraq. And until they are out of Iraq, they are not going to be safe. This is an international crisis and we need international help and support.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. May I just have a moment more to follow up, Secretary McGurk, I hear the passion in your voice. We are in an open hearing, you know where they are who is going to rescue them? Whose responsibility will it be to get them from where they are into safe haven? Because otherwise, we are leaving Maliki now without responsibility. We are saying, and you are documenting that they are not there. Let me just say that when my government speaks, I try with my best heart and mind to believe it. But I have got to see them alive and well to believe that they are not where I think they are, but they are in a—I am glad to hear that, I want them to be safe, but I want them to be in the arms of their loved ones or at least to be recognized by their loved ones that they are safe somewhere. So can that be done in the next 48 hours? Can we have a manner that indicates that they are safe?

Mr. MCGURK. I will repeat here a statement that we issued on September 16th, and it is notable, I was going to mention this in my colloquy with the Congressman to my left, that within hours of the attack, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps issued a statement praising the attack. We issued a statement on September 16th calling on the Government of Iran to use whatever influence it might have with groups who might be holding its missing persons to secure their immediate release. And I can talk more about details and about the status of these individuals and brief some members of the subcommittee. I would be happy to follow up.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. Thank you Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. McGurk, thank you testimony, thank all the witnesses in the audience for your participation and with that the subcommittee is adjourned. Thank you, sir.

[Whereupon, at 4:08 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

## A P P E N D I X

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MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

**SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE**  
**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

**Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa**  
**Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman**

November 6, 2013

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held by the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at [www.foreignaffairs.house.gov](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)):

**DATE:** Wednesday, November 13, 2013  
**TIME:** 2:00 p.m.  
**SUBJECT:** U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Iraq  
**WITNESS:** Mr. Brett McGurk  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Iraq and Iran  
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

**By Direction of the Chairman**

*The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-3021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.*



# COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON Middle East and North Africa HEARING

Day Wednesday Date 11/13/13 Room 2172

Starting Time 2:38 p.m. Ending Time 4:08 p.m.

Recesses    (    to    ) (    to    ) (    to    ) (    to    ) (    to    ) (    to    )

Presiding Member(s)

*Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. DeSantis*

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☐

Televised ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒

Stenographic Record ☒

TITLE OF HEARING:

*U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Iraq*

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*(See attached)*

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: (Mark with an \* if they are not members of full committee.)

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☒ No ☐

*(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)*

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)

*QFR - Rep. Sherman*

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_

or

TIME ADJOURNED 4:08 p.m.

  
Subcommittee Staff Director

**Hearing Attendance****Hearing Title:** U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Iraq**Date:** 11/13/2013*Noncommittee Members*

<b>Member</b>	<b>Present</b>
Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana (FL)	X
Chabot, Steve (OH)	X
Wilson, Joe (SC)	X
Kinzinger, Adam (IL)	X
Cotton, Tom (AR)	X
Weber, Randy (TX)	X
Desantis, Ron (FL)	X
Radel, Trey (FL)	X
Collins, Doug (GA)	X
Meadows, Mark (NC)	X
Yoho, Ted (FL)	X
Messer, Luke (IN)	X
Rohrabacher, Dana (CA)	X
Poe, Ted (TX)	X

<b>Member</b>	<b>Present</b>
Deutch, Ted (FL)	X
Connolly, Gerald (VA)	X
Higgins, Brian (NY)	
Cicilline, David (RI)	X
Grayson, Alan (FL)	
Vargas, Juan (CA)	X
Schneider, Bradley (IL)	X
Kennedy, Joseph (MA)	X
Meng, Grace (NY)	X
Frankel, Lois (FL)	
Sherman, Brad (CA)	X
<i>Jackson-Lee, Sheila</i> (TX)	X



***Question for the Record****Submitted by the Honorable Brad Sherman**To Deputy Assistant Secretary for Iraq and Iran Brett McGurk***Question 1:**

**Saddam Hussein's regime incurred a large sum of debts, particularly to other Arab countries, during the Iran-Iraq War. Have these debts by Arab countries in the Gulf (and other Arab countries) been forgiven? Does Iraq owe anything still? If so, how much does Iraq owe and how much has been forgiven? To which countries and how much does Iraq owe money for debts incurred during the Iran-Iraq War? For these questions, please provide answers with regard to before and after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, where relevant. For example, did some Arab countries forgive Iraq's debt (and how much of it) after Saddam's fall?**

Iraq has taken significant steps to improve its standing in the region following the end of the Saddam Hussein era. To date, it has closed almost all Chapter VII obligations with Kuwait and has strengthened relations with neighbors like Jordan, Turkey, UAE, and Egypt.

Following the 2003 collapse of the Saddam Hussein regime, the Congressional Research Service estimated Iraq's foreign debt at \$130 –140 billion, including Paris Club member debt (estimated at \$42.5 billion), non-Paris Club bilateral debt (estimated at \$67.4 billion), commercial debt (estimated at \$20 billion), and multilateral debt (estimated at \$0.5 billion). re closely following developments in conflicts around the world. Based on current assessments, our budget request includes the funding needs we anticipate for FY 2014.

In 2004, the Paris Club's 19 members signed an agreement to reduce Iraq's external debt by 80% (approximately \$32 billion). The United States forgave its Saddam-era debt, worth \$4.1 billion, in November 2004. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the primary source for Iraq's repayment information, estimated that, as of the end of 2012, Iraq's total remaining external debt was \$60 billion (28% of GDP), including about \$42 billion to non-Paris Club creditors.

We understand that the majority of the up to \$130 billion in Iraqi external debt is attributed to debt incurred from the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War. Precise figures for Iraq's foreign debt obligations, including to Arab countries for debts incurred during the Iran-Iraq War, are unknown. Iraq's external creditors do not routinely make their bilateral debt information public and portions of Iraqi debts have not been reported to debt monitoring bodies. Such concerns have led to calculation disparities in exactly what Iraq actually owes and how interest on this debt should be tallied.

Below numbers reflect information available to us through both government and open source reporting (Note: information is current as of 2011).

Non-Paris Club Debt to Arab Countries (estimated) (in U.S. \$ million)	
Saudi Arabia	\$30,000
Kuwait	\$27,000
Qatar	\$4,000
United Arab Emirates	\$5,800
Jordan	\$1,300
Morocco	\$32
Algeria	\$ .4

The combined external debt owed by Iraq to other Arab countries, including Egypt and Sudan, was estimated to be below \$1 million. Reportedly, the GOI has settled outstanding claims with Lebanon, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen.